



*Sharing our story  
Celebrating our faith  
Shaping our future*

**13-14 September 2019**

**Ideas for Pastoral Initiatives submitted by the Assembly**

## A PRAYER FOR THE DIOCESE OF SALE

Jesus Christ, yesterday, today and forever.  
One with us in our humanity.  
be with us in birth,  
be with us in life,  
be with us in death.

Lord Jesus, bless our Gippsland.  
Bless us in our mountains and  
valleys, plains, rivers and seas.  
Bless us in our natural resources.  
Bless us in our cities and towns.

Lord Jesus, teach us communion  
with our local community:  
to know, love and serve our families  
and friends,  
to know, love and serve those who are poor,  
to know, love and serve those who wait for you.

Lord Jesus, in this ever-changing land,  
grace us to listen to your Word,  
grace us to wonder at your presence,  
grace us to welcome you into our midst.

To you, our Redeemer,  
the beginning and end of time,  
to the Father, unending source of all good,  
and to the Holy Spirit, seal of infinite love,  
be all honour and glory, now and forever.  
Amen



(by Fr Mark Godridge © Catholic Diocese of Sale, Victoria, Australia)

## Message from Bishop Patrick O'Regan

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We have been a little out of practice when it comes to gatherings of our Diocese. That is what makes our recent gathering, the Diocesan Assembly, the first for some time, that much sweeter. We have learnt rather a lot about how to host such events.

I write this as Advent takes its deeper turn. I was struck by the reading from Isaiah. I know that I have read this many times before. But in 2019 it speaks to me more deeply. It speaks to me more deeply for it is all about hope, and at this time on the journey of the Diocese of Sale that virtue is one that is most needed. It was the one that was most shown forth at our Assembly.



Isaiah 30:18-26

*The Lord is waiting to be gracious to you, to rise and take pity on you, for the Lord is a just God; happy are all who hope in him. Yes, people of Zion, you will live in Jerusalem and weep no more. He will be gracious to you when he hears your cry; when he hears he will answer. When the Lord has given you the bread of suffering and the water of distress, he who is your teacher will hide no longer, and you will see your teacher with your own eyes. Whether you turn to right or left, your ears will hear these words behind you, 'This is the way, follow it.'*

*You will regard your silvered idols and gilded images as unclean. You will throw them away like the polluted things they are, shouting after them, 'Good riddance!' He will send rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the bread that the ground provides will be rich and nourishing. Your cattle will graze, that day, in wide pastures. Oxen and donkeys that till the ground will eat a salted fodder, winnowed with shovel and fork. On every lofty mountain, on every high hill there will be streams and watercourses, on the day of the great slaughter when the strongholds fall. Then moonlight will be bright as sunlight and sunlight itself be seven times brighter – like the light of seven days in one – on the day the Lord dresses the wound of his people and heals the bruises his blows have left.*

The contents of this booklet are a fruit of our gathering and ought to serve as both feedback from our sessions for those who may not have been able to be present and as stimulus for who wish to work out what we can already be doing in our Parishes.

Asking God's continued blessings upon each of you



God is good, good indeed!

## DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY 2019

### Theme 1. Faith Formation & Spirituality: *living out the joy of the Gospel*

#### Scripture

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.* (Romans 15:13)

*You must make every effort to support your faith with goodness, and goodness with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with endurance, and endurance with godliness, and godliness with mutual affection, and mutual affection with love. For if these things are yours and are increasing among you, they keep you from being ineffective and unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (2 Peter 1:5-8)

#### Teaching

Seek God to find him and find God to keep searching for God forever. Often we seek as if we were blind...Our life is not given to us like an opera libretto, in which all is written down; but it means going, asking, doing, searching, seeing...We must enter into the adventure of the quest for meeting God; we must let God search and encounter us.

*(Interview with Pope Francis, 30/9/2013)*

*Today's vast and rapid cultural changes demand that we constantly seek ways of expressing unchanging truths in a language which brings out their abiding newness.*

*(Pope John Paul II, Evangelium Vitae, #41).*

*The ideas that have been suggested here should be dovetailed with the **Faith Formation: Raw Responses** where some of these suggestions have their genesis or where suggestions are more explicitly expanded upon. Many of the following ideas flow easily into one or more categories. Many of the following suggestions overlap into Theme 4: Liturgy and Prayer*

### Ideas for Parish Initiatives

#### PRAYER AND THE SPIRITUAL LIFE

Creation of small groups for

- Silent or contemplative prayer to build a relationship of experience.
- Gospel discussion
- Lectio Divina
- Experimental Prayer
- Age relevant
- Bible Study courses
- Daily Prayer of the Church/Liturgy of the Hours/Divine Office: small groups can join in
- Group discussion is part of prayer, allowing people to get to know one another

### Family Prayer

- The Rosary
- Grace before meals

### Other prayer ideas

- Develop a sense of liturgy through non-Eucharistic liturgies first
- Prayer parties
- Prayers in pyjamas
- Parish retreat
- Delivery of 'content' in a variety of ways that connect at different levels... for example, The Rosary as a form of meditation/mindfulness in faith
- 24-hour adoration chapels in every parish
- Importance of Spiritual Direction. Teach people to have spiritual companions
- Catechist classes separate to children's liturgy and invite families to take part.
- Parishioners input on homily and engaging and interactive homily. A group to get together with the parish priest to frame the homily.

*Creation of small groups for prayer, scripture & hospitality was a constant theme*

### SCRIPTURE, TRADITION & THEOLOGY

- Gospel Discussion group that meets to share the weekly readings
- Structured Bible study
- Adult formation - speakers who can revitalize our faith, Sacraments explained in an age appropriate manner
- Sessions on *Catechism of The Catholic Church* (CCC) so we can know and share our faith.
- Providing opportunities for adult formation & networking between nearby parishes
- Building into the Mass Themes to engage family such as at Christmas, Blessing of the Cribbs & at Easter, blessing of a Cross which have been brought from home

*Formal and informal exposure to Scripture and Church Tradition were strong themes*

### SACRAMENTS

- Explicit teaching on the meaning of the Holy Eucharist
- Language is crucial in faith-formation, sacraments, celebrations and need to be adapted in making them relevant
- Families coming together at the end of confirmation for a meal/gathering to share the child's new knowledge and presenting it as their own.
- Family parties after sacrament in the parish hall
- Link sacramental programs to parent faith formation
- Kids masses with catechism session
- *GodStart* program for Baptism families to close the gap between Baptism and the other Sacraments of Initiation
- As part of the preparation of the sacrament, Mass attendance to be encouraged in the lead up to assist with faith formation

*Linking the Sacrament with family life, celebration and joy was a constant theme*

## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

- Importance of keeping up the practices of the faith from a young age: mass, Reconciliation, prayer (The Rosary), Adoration
- Making the sacrament programs less "a part of the curriculum" within schools, and more of a feel for faith development.
- Open doors and communication between parish schools and parish, including accessibility.
- A children's choir at mass on an occasion
- Practical support for teachers who are witnesses of Christ for their students
- Parish needs a visible connection with the parochial school

*Linking the practices of the faith to the school, the parish and family is the consistent cycle*

## RESOURCES & COMMUNICATION

- Central/Diocesan user friendly brochure with information about Catholic teachings
- New resources for evangelisation e.g. movies and songs.
- Resources for Baptism and Marriage preparation so young parents can transform faith
- Communication between ministers of various different groups - e.g. youth ministers, leaders of RCIA... perhaps meeting up and discussing what works, and what doesn't within each parish, and then implementing ideas
- Social media groups (a.k.a. messenger) ... easy to communicate and can provide chances to ask questions instantly.
- More relevant discussion about issues (a.k.a. what is occurring with the plenary council) within the parishes, for those who have been in the Church for a while.
- Social media presence within each "area", rather than just the Sale diocese.
- Parish Feedback: we can't keep doing the same thing... we need to start new activities that people want
- Start a parish library - for people to share their spiritual books/DVDs/Movies. Resources that children can take home e.g. carton bible stories - visual and material stimuli. Christian radio / TV/ podcasts promoting faith and issues
- Co-ordination of a list of good websites which have worked for parishes
- Invest money in building faith, having guest speakers, social media, bible study and sacramental program
- Diocese to provide more adult formation in theology and scriptures through guest speakers.
- Silos within parishes can be a problem - enhancing a common communication system would be useful - online could be part of the solution
- Index of expertise: Huge wealth of talent right under our noses in the diocese that we don't know about, in each parish that could be utilised
- The 'Formed' is a great website to interact.
- Make faithful resources available, such as YouCat.
- Create links between schools and parishes so that faith formation is not seen as a school responsibility or parish responsibility - we all jump in.
- Creative ways in which we share the Good News by using our senses (touch, hearing, sight, taste) for all ages to join in & experience fun & faith formative activities which are Christ centred – Messy Church Programs

*The accessibility of faith resources, the sharing of ideas, the pooling of expertise and the availability of experienced practitioners are of a piece with the need to have access to ways to build up the parish family*

## **ECUMENISM**

- We need to break down the barriers between denominations of the Christian faiths, and other faiths, and be inviting, welcoming, and comfortable with other expressions of faith.
- Engage in 'reciprocal ecumenism' ... learning from each other's tradition by having combined liturgical events planned by a committee made up of members of each tradition.

*A minor theme in the Assembly discussion but one that links almost implicitly with the need to be open and welcoming*

## **FAMILY LIFE & YOUTH**

- Create a youth ministry council
- Tap into youth spirituality where possible, we can both learn from each other.
- Focus on the family (website)... how to help families pray - thank God, say sorry to one another, scripture reading - relevant to children's age -- not enforcing our style of praying on children
- Connect with young people/students through food eg. Bible study followed by meal on a Friday night has worked well
- BASIC CHRISTIAN COMMUNITIES (e.g. CELLS) - Every parish should have small groups to have fellowship and to grow in their faith together and meet regularly
- Forming 'Family Groups' ... the domestic church
- Connecting older parishioners with children through scripture – e.g. craft for Christ
- Alpha course works well to start off faith development Life in the Spirit
- Social justice groups appeal to younger people. Establishment of social justice activities can allow for faith formation, faith in action and great community/friendships.

*'Cells of Evangelisation' was mentioned specifically at least twice by participants and 'Alpha' for youth and the disaffected had strong support*

## **FAITH BUILDING & RELATIONSHIPS**

- Engaging on the first day of school with parents and students, e.g. "tissues and tea"
- Cohesive activity such as Bingo to bring people together, initially.
- Everybody is on their own faith journey so in a joyful community we need to **offer a variety** so people can choose what will help their faith journey
- Start where people are ... Footy games, parties. God is here! So start with a prayer
- A buddy system with parishes (one from the East, one from the West) so we can meet up/ share by email and keep in touch what is happening and encourage each other
- Special Interest Groups such as RCIA coming together once a month after mass (maybe even a home mass) to share a meal
- Parish camp for families - Youth camp, Parents' Day



- Parish activities for children in the week prior to Christmas
- Organise Music workshops for the youth, which would encourage the young to contribute to faith formation
- Form a Parish Media Team that works on promoting/ circulating resources and information that enrich and nourish our faith
- Extend personal invitations to people who have gifts to offer the parish community, rather than a general invitation to all volunteers
- Form age related Hospitality groups- Eg: Cups of tea for adults, bingo afternoons for the elderly, Friday social night for teens... Faith grows when people of God GATHER!
- Personal Testimonies of faith journey.
- Diocesan prayer and worship day for the young through music.
- Pentecost day- multicultural day a day to celebrate our uniqueness.
- Saints of the countries to be celebrated- eg Indian community celebrate and host a gathering with mass acknowledging and celebrating their saints and traditions.
- Priests to visit families.
- Know people and their families - take time to talk to people you don't know at Sunday mass
- Coffee at school morning drop off run by parishioners
- Sunday Night Parish Get Together.... Maybe a 'Bowls' night
- Hold a Parish Forum to discuss issues facing the parish as well as the need for formation
- Discern a plan/mission for the parish incorporating community and faith formation as per the needs of the community
- Create notice board sharing the literature that would help the laity, a Library perhaps... faith formation depends on hope.
- Use technology to reach out in welcome to active and 'resting' Catholics
- Do an audit of parishioner skills... and use the talents that are offered
- Visit the 'disengaged' and ask "Why?" and "What can we do?"
- Testimonies of parishioners of faithful about their knowledge and skill , sharing the common challenges
- Faith formation through service to the community: Vinnies, community meals, etc.
- Faith formation needs to meet the needs of the community... so consult

*A list of ideas to bring people together*



## DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY 2019

### Theme 2. Leadership & Governance: *providing leadership and structures that promote evangelisation*

#### Scripture

*In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)*

*But Jesus called them and said: "Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave, just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

(Matthew 20:25-28)

#### Teaching

I see clearly that the thing the church needs most today is the ability to heal wounds and to warm the hearts of the faithful; it needs nearness, proximity.

*(Pope Francis, Interview with Jesuit magazine La Civita Cattolica)*

It is impossible to think of a conversion of our activity as a Church that does not include the active participation of all the members of God's People. . . Such is the case with clericalism, an approach that not only nullifies the character of Christians, but also tends to diminish and undervalue the baptismal grace that the Holy Spirit has placed in the heart of the people."

*(Confronting the Systemic Dysfunction of Clericalism, Association of U.S. Catholic Priests, 2019, p4.)*

## Ideas for Parish Initiatives

### PASTORAL PLANNING

- Parishes to have mission and vision statements that provide direction for the parish
- Creation of Pastoral Plan for the Diocese and individual parishes
- Annual review of Pastoral Plan
- Plans would include short term and long term objectives covering finance, liturgy, social justice, engaging families & young people and identifying connections with the broader community
- Establish processes for reporting, feedback, consultation and review to parishes
- Plans must include ways to engage the Catholic school communities with the parishes
- Pastoral plan to be reflected in the finance plan for the Diocese and Parishes
- All actions must include a reporting loop so that the whole parish or diocese can see what the plans are and whether they are being achieved (Plan, Do, Check, Act)
- Using quality resources such as the Australian Catholic Bishops resource *Building Stronger Parishes Handbook* <https://www.buildingstrongerparishes.catholic.org.au/>

## PASTORAL COUNCILS

- Create Diocesan and Parish Pastoral Councils
- Establishment of Parish Pastoral Council (PPC) in every parish of the Diocese of Sale
- Formation and training of PPC members as a ministry of leadership (use Parish Pastoral Council Handbook 3<sup>rd</sup> edition *free download* <http://evangelisationbrisbane.org.au/assets/uploads/ppc-hbook-complete-text.pdf> Resource List for PPC'
- <https://www.cam.org.au/evangelisation/News/NewsView/Article/21386/Resources-for-Parish-Leaders>
- Parish Pastoral Councils need active support and involvement from the clergy
- Parish Pastoral Council to be reflective of the different groups in each parish community
- Teams need to be highly trained and more informed so that they can take on a more active role in the parish community.
- Need to be an effective body not a status symbol or figurehead
- Requires ensuring continuity when priests change
- Ongoing support, mentoring, professional development of leaders and staff
- Leadership with an eye to serve
- Leadership focusing on Youth
- Encourage parishioner ideas

## FINANCE COUNCILS

- Formation and training of Finance Council members (FC) so that they can collaborate with the PPC in leading the parish community
- Awareness of the role Finance Councils have to support parish and diocesan pastoral priorities that may be planned and enacted

## FORMATION OF PARISHIONERS

- Theological formation to develop faith of parishioners
- Ongoing skills training required so that lay people are able to use their skills in the parish and to enable participation in leading parish ministries

## SHARING DIOCESAN RESOURCES/BUILDING DIOCESAN LINKS

- Build a resource bank of ideas and expertise that can be shared across the diocese and between parishes
- Develop parish twinning arrangements
- Parish Pastoral Council to be reflective of the different groups in each parish community
- Provide a diocesan event each year to allow for building up relationships

## **COMMUNICATION**

- Improve the use of all modes of electronic communication for the Diocese and individual parishes
- Develop communication plans that identify platforms and prospective audience
- Identify communication channels to engage young people

## **EXERCISING TRANSPARENT LEADERSHIP**

- Regular Diocesan and Parish financial reports to be provided
- Minutes of Pastoral Council and Finance Council meetings to be made available to all
- Understanding and exercising transparent leadership e.g.
  - Communicating PPC vision and pastoral planning goals
  - Communicating the state of parish finances
  - Awareness that the Finance Council's work is to enable pastoral priorities of parish and diocese to be planned and enacted
- Clear outlines for leadership and ministry roles

## **SUPPORT OF LEADERS AND STAFF**

- Mandatory professional supervision and mentoring for ALL in ministry and leadership roles, not only the clergy
- Be prepared to invest in those who we call to lead – wages, training, mentoring
- Leadership that is distributed throughout the parish to allow for shared responsibility
- Developing the faith and spirituality of all who exercise leadership.
- Assisting laity to increase their active participation in the life of the church
- Cultivating the practice of discernment in making decisions on behalf of the community
- Equipping and empowering women to take their place

## **PRACTICAL PARISH MATTERS**

- Shared general and finance administration for smaller parishes
- Diocesan support requested for finance management and administrative roles
- Upgrade computer systems to accommodate current (and future) practices and allow for better communication between parishes and the Diocese
- An appropriately trained group of parishioners is required to ensure that parishes survive, particularly in the instances where there is no parish priest

## DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY 2019

### Theme 3: Families and Vocation:

*raising disciples in our families, so that they can go out into the world*

#### Scripture

*We love because he first loved us. (1 John 4:19)*

*Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children, and live in love, as Christ loved us. (Ephesians 5:1)*

*And he said to them, 'Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. (Mark 16:15)*

#### Teaching

"Perfect families do not exist. This must not discourage us. Quite the opposite. Love is something we learn; love is something we live; love grows as it is 'forged' by the concrete situations which each particular family experiences. Love is born and constantly develops amid lights and shadows. Love can flourish in men and women who try not to make conflict the last word, but rather a new opportunity. An opportunity to seek help, an opportunity to question how we need to improve, an opportunity to discover the God Who is with us and never abandons us. This is a great legacy that we can give to our children, a very good lesson: we make mistakes, yes; we have problems, yes. But we know that that is not really what counts. We know that mistakes, problems and conflicts are an opportunity to draw closer to others, to draw closer to God."

*(Pope Francis Address to Festival of Families, Philadelphia USA, Sept. 27, 2015)*

What kind of world do we want to leave for the future? Let us leave a world with families. Let us care for our families, because they are true schools for the future, spaces of freedom, and centres of humanity. And let us reserve a special place in our families for individual and communal prayer. Let us pray that families, through their life of prayer and love, become ever more clearly "schools of true human development".

*(Pope Francis' Prayer Intention for Families, August 2019)*

*The ideas that have been suggested here should be dovetailed with the **Faith Formation: Raw Responses** where some of these suggestions have their genesis or where suggestions are more explicitly expanded upon. Many of the following ideas flow easily into one or more categories. Many of the following suggestions overlap into other Themes.*

## Ideas for Parish Initiatives

### GROUPS AND PROGRAMS

Raise the profile of groups within the parish and diocese and invite participation in small groups or ministries e.g.

- Marriage Encounter as a way to nurture marriage
- Teams of Our Lady: a group for married couples which nurtures couple and family life.
- The Alpha program.
- A retreat for newly married Couples
- Family ministry e.g. Passionist Family Groups

Promote non-judgemental support and resources to assist families in crisis e.g.

- Parish Priest,
- CatholicCare
- Counselling Team
- Referral to quality professional providers.

### PARISH CELEBRATIONS

- Vibrant celebrations in the parish
- A variety of liturgies to celebrate different events.
- Celebrating marriage anniversaries, birthdays, etc.
- Invite people personally for cuppa after Mass, for a healing Mass, etc.

### MASS (for ideas, please see Liturgy and Prayer)

- Church open days for interested people.
- Priest uses teaching moments during the Mass to explain what is happening.
- At the start of Mass, people are asked to turn, introduce yourself (if necessary) and welcome each other.
- Specific Masses dedicated to various cultural backgrounds.
- Greeters or Welcomers who makes efforts to pick out newcomers and to make connections with them later on
- Family Mass Themes - at Easter bring a cross from home, at Christmas bring a nativity scene from home for a blessing during the Mass.

### YOUTH

- Provide young people with participatory roles
- Be aware of the needs of young people in the life of the parish and cater for where possible
- Invite Youth to give testimony, speak of encounter.
- Provide opportunities in Catholic schools and parishes for students to share their own story of faith
- Assist the young in their discernment of their relationship with God

## SHARING OUR STORY

Encourage people to share their stories of encountering Jesus e.g.

- Gospel discussion groups
- Prayer groups
- Parish assemblies

Share good news stories with your faith community and the wider community

Build relationships with others in the community e.g.

- Christian churches and those of other faiths
- Local community groups

## VOCATION

- Promote vocational awareness in parishes e.g.
  - Married
  - Single
  - Religious life
  - Clergy
- Parish celebrations supporting vocations

## SCHOOLS

- Promote rich liturgical and prayer life in schools with a strong connection to parish life
- Explore other opportunities for connections between the parish and school communities
  - School concerts
  - Social events
  - Fundraising
  - Prayer circles
  - Playgroups
  - Masses of Anointing of the Sick

## DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY 2019

### Theme 4. Liturgy and Prayer: *nourishing our communities*

#### Scripture

I will praise your name forever, my King and my God. (Psalm 145)

Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:19)

*Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I will hear you.* (Jeremiah 29:12)

#### Teaching

We cannot forget, first of all, that the liturgy is life that forms, not an idea to be learned. We know that it is not enough to change the liturgical books to improve the quality of the liturgy. ... For life to be truly a praise pleasing to God, it is indeed necessary to change the heart. Christian conversion is oriented to this conversion, which is an encounter of life with the "God of the living" (Mt 22: 32). (*Pope Francis' Address to the Congregation for Divine Worship & The Discipline of the Sacraments, Feb 14, 2019*)

Every liturgical celebration, because it is an action of Christ the priest and of His Body which is the Church, is a sacred action surpassing all others. The liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time, it is the source from which all her power flows. (*2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, #7,10*)

## Ideas for Parish Initiatives

### FORMATION & TRAINING

- Appropriate training and formation for clergy, those involved in liturgical ministry and the entire assembly
- Each parish to have a well formed and functioning liturgy team
- Explore and promote quality Catholic resources for liturgical ministries

### HOMILIES

Encouraging lay reflections connected to Sunday Scripture where appropriate e.g.

- Brief lay reflection after communion in conjunction with shorter homily as pre-arranged with the priest
- Personal testimony during Masses for Vocations or a gathering after Mass e.g. from pilgrims, young people who have been to WYD etc

For weekday Masses, there may be days where there are no homilies but instead, a time of contemplating Scripture



## RITUAL & PRAYER

- Rituals need to be animated by
  - Good presiding
  - Welcoming community
  - Uplifting music
  - Good proclamation of scripture
  - Engaging and relevant homilies
  - That the worship space fosters optimal liturgical participation
- Offer faith communities a variety of liturgical ritual and prayer, to nurture and strengthen their spiritual and prayer life
- Encourage and support popular piety – e.g. Marian devotions, Divine Mercy etc.
- Encourage and promote opportunities for family prayer

## MUSIC

Music serves the liturgy and the assembly's worship, therefore music ministries should be developed so that:

- Musicians and singers have adequate formation
- Encourage the selection of quality liturgical music in a variety of styles,
- In places where live music is not possible, there is Catholic music available via CD, streaming or digital download
- Find a musical balance serving the liturgy but also attentive to the pastoral needs of the worshipping community

## HOSPITALITY

Cultivate welcome and inclusion at parish liturgies by:

- Finding ways to invite non-participatory families to mass, other rituals and social gatherings
- Encourage Diocesan and Regional Youth Gatherings – e.g. Youth of the Valley; LAMP (Youth from the Western Region Parishes of the Diocese of Sale)
- Encouraging involvement by people, including youth, in liturgical ministry

## LANGUAGE

- Where possible, inclusive language should be promoted and used.
- Where possible, make liturgical language accessible and understandable.
- Where appropriate, e.g. Prayer of the Faithful, the Rosary and liturgical music can be experienced in different languages, reflecting the pastoral and cultural needs of the worshipping community
- Various parish groups may create their own prayer/s for inclusion in a parish prayer book which is distributed to all parishioners.

## SACRAMENTS

- Programs available on the Internet such as 'Sacraments 101' from *Busted Halo* can be used to educate the congregation on their faith. Play videos at Mass (5 minutes' duration) e.g. once a month.
- Diocesan resources e.g. Diocese of Sale *Sacrament Preparation for Primary Students: Catechist Resource*, *Walk with Me: Christian Initiation for Secondary Students*
- Videos from Bishop Robert Barron *Word on Fire* ministries and other Catholic Sacrament resources

## SPIRITUALITY

Offer opportunities for spiritual formation e.g.

- To break open the Pope's encyclicals and apostolic letters
- To revisit the teachings of Vatican II

## TECHNOLOGY

Making good use of technology e.g.

- Appropriate use of data projectors during Mass
- Teaching videos
- Prayer apps including Daily Prayer of the Church
- Use PowerPoint & bulletins to educate those present at Mass what is happening e.g. what the money collection is for & where it is going etc.

## DIOCESAN ASSEMBLY 2019

### Theme 5. The Welcoming Community:

*a community on mission, not maintenance*

#### Scripture

*Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.*

(Romans 15:7)

*There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.* (Galatians 3:28)

*You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name.* (John 15:16)

#### Teaching

Preach the Gospel at all times. If necessary, use words. (*St Francis of Assisi*)

The joys and the hopes, the griefs and the anxieties of the people of this age, especially those who are poor or in any way afflicted, these are the joys and hopes, the griefs and anxieties of the followers of Christ. Indeed, nothing genuinely human fails to raise an echo in their hearts.

(*2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council, 'Gaudium et Spes' Pastoral Constitution in the Modern World, #1*)

In life, God accompanies persons, and we must accompany them, starting from their situation. It is necessary to accompany them with mercy. (*Pope Francis, 30 Sept 2013*)

We must restore hope to young people, help the old, be open to the future, spread love. Be poor among the poor. We need to include the excluded and preach peace.

(*Pope Francis, Interview with La Repubblica 1 Oct 2013*)

Instead of imposing new obligations, (Christians) should appear as people who wish to share their joy, who point to a horizon of beauty and who invite others to a delicious banquet.

(*Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium: The Joy of the Gospel, #15*)

### Ideas for Parish Initiatives

#### COMMUNICATION

##### Technology

- Use a variety of technological tools to communicate parish and regional events and news.
- Publicise the Diocesan website [www.cdsale.org.au](http://www.cdsale.org.au) and the Diocesan Facebook page (Diocese of Sale)

##### Formation

Foster faith formation and spiritual development through

- Bible study, reflection and discussion
- Teaching of the Catholic faith through presentations, videos and programs

- Fostering the work of small groups to encourage fellowship, prayer and faith formation

## Mass

- For those unable to attend Mass, provide links to Mass for You at Home e.g.
  - **Mass on Demand** (Cath News Youtube channel)  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/cathnews>
  - **Mass For You At Home** has been broadcast by the 10 Network since August 1971. The show's basic premise is to allow viewers to participate in a Sunday Mass from their homes. It is viewed by thousands of people across Australia every Sunday and this Mass is repeated on the Aurora Channel on Foxtel twice a day throughout the week. Channel 10, Sundays at 6pm or check local guides.  
<http://www.mfyah.com.au/index.html>
  - **Channel 9** <https://www.yourtv.com.au/program/mass-for-you-at-home/131378/>
  - **Network 10** (10Play) <https://10play.com.au/mass-for-you-at-home>
- Engaging and vibrant liturgies through
  - Appropriate use of lay reflections and personal witness
  - Use of Inclusive Language e.g. Lectionary
  - Engaging music for all
  - Engagement of school students in weekend Masses.
  - Fostering communal worship
  - Appropriate use of teaching moments during Mass as a means of formation for the assembly
  - Care and support of those who may feel excluded from the faith community e.g. gay/disabled/aged/refugees

## HOSPITALITY

- Be invitational and vibrant! This is the responsibility of all parishioners. This will look different in different places.
- Buddy system for newcomers
- Have welcomers who have name tags at Mass and follow-up later.
- Tea, coffee, cake on a regular basis can create a sense of welcome, belonging and community
- Show love in action e.g.
  - make a point of finding out how people are going and what they need - look after the older people in the parish, visit nursing homes, welcome new families, Catholic playgroups etc.
  - Begin with small gestures, a smile, a warm handshake, ....
- New Parishioner cards, a Welcome Kit, GodStart program, RCIA, send the resting Catholics a general Christmas card, with a wish and perhaps Mass times, no donation envelopes.
- Welcoming young families e.g.
  - Introduction of the baby to the community
  - have a comfort room for parents during Mass when needed

- have a parishioner buddy with parents and children to help them while at mass
- welcoming newcomers and engaging with them, invitation to homes and other social events

## SUPPORT

- Provide pathways and support for victims of sexual abuse and their families or anyone affected by abuse e.g.
  - Create a Listening and Support group within the Parish
  - Life Boat: Program from Geelong (founded by Fr Kevin Dillon, St Mary's Basilica Geelong <https://www.lifeboatgeelong.com.au/>) , supporting the abused in the community.
  - CatholicCare counselling and support services, Diocese of Sale
  - Emmaus Spirituality Centre, Diocese of Sale
- Invite parishioners to explore their God-given gifts and charisms and how they can best use these at the service of the parish
- Providing pastoral care and welcome to people who are struggling to show that we care about them e.g.
  - Spend time with people
  - take them a meal or share a coffee
  - providing people with knowledge of services and support that are available
  - arrange small Christmas hampers for families and also for people who are on their own or newly widowed
  - inviting and accompanying them to social functions
- Investigate areas of community outreach and how your parish community might participate and assist.
  - Collaborate with other Christian communities and interfaith groups
  - "Be an Angel Day" - where we can reach out to someone, especially those who live on their own, the elderly, single mums.
  - Supporting the work of the local St Vincent de Paul or other groups with a focus on community outreach
  - Special needs and interest groups. An opportunity to connect with others through support and social interaction outside of the Parish

## ENGAGEMENT

- Create a parish welcoming group to provide intentional hospitality
- Explore ways in which parish groups can engage members of their faith community e.g.
  - Passionist Family Groups <https://www.pfgm.org/>
  - The Alpha program for those who wish to deepen or re-engage with the Catholic faith <https://australia.alpha.org/>
  - GodStart to welcome children/Catholic families into the church <https://www.ccam.org.au/page/16/godstart>
  - Couples for Christ program <https://www.couplesforchristglobal.org>
  - Teams Oceania: For Married Spirituality <http://www.teamsoceania.com.au/>
  - Jesus Youth <https://jesusyouth.org.au/>

- More activities to engage all ages, groups in parish - try a range of activities to engage the whole community.
- Extend a personal invitation and encourage people to form smaller groups, especially in bigger parishes, to get to know one another better. Might also work for parishes in partnership
- Initiate and support an active youth group. Invest in our young people by everyone making an effort to connect.

#### **WIDER COMMUNITY**

- Plan events e.g. invite neighbouring parishes / other local Christian churches to share in a meal
- Well-resourced parishes team up with smaller/under-resourced parish communities.
- Live the teachings of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Vatican Council in our parishes and our engagement with our world
- Meeting people where they by focussing on what they love to do e.g.
  - going to restaurants/coffee/hang out together/gallery- have artists bring their art works/cafe right next to the church.
  - Bible study/discussion on Sunday's gospel in café/Pancake Parlour - for single men and women
  - Spirituality in the Pub
- Encouraging and equipping people to live out their baptismal calling as a disciple of Christ in the community. What might that look like in your locality?

## YOUR PASTORAL PLANNING

| Theme                                 | Project | How? | Who? |
|---------------------------------------|---------|------|------|
| <b>1. Faith Formation</b>             |         |      |      |
| <b>2. Leadership &amp; Governance</b> |         |      |      |
| <b>3. Families &amp; Vocation</b>     |         |      |      |
| <b>4. Liturgy &amp; Prayer</b>        |         |      |      |
| <b>5. The Welcoming Community</b>     |         |      |      |



## CELEBRATING PARISH LIFE

Parishes, schools, groups and agencies are encouraged to use this resource as a way of re-animating the life of their faith communities following the 2020 coronavirus pandemic. Regardless of size, people or resources, each community will find ideas for pastoral initiatives that may be adapted and developed for them.

Some helpful reflection points when considering each Diocesan Assembly Theme:

- How have the experiences of 2020/2021 and the global pandemic shaped the way I think about my faith, our church, our society?
- What do we value or cherish about my community? What gives us life?
- How is God calling our community forward at this time?
- What may we do to strengthen this aspect of our community life?
- What other areas need our attention?
- Have we invited others to share their stories and have we been willing to truly listen to them and include them in our communal discernment?
- By what means are we inviting as broad a participation as possible in our communal life?
- By what measures will we evaluate our pastoral initiatives?

If you have a great idea or project which has worked well in your community, please tell us about it and include a few photos as well. We'd like to share your good news with the rest of our Diocesan family.

**Sophy Morley**

***'Gaudium et Spes' Plenary 2020 Convenor***

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